CHAPTER 3

CORRESPONDENCE/MESSAGE SYSTEM

One of your most important tasks as a Yeoman (YN) is the preparation of correspondence and messages. You will be expected to produce properly formatted letters with no uncorrected errors quickly and efficiently-and not just letters either. The term *official correspondence* includes all written material—publications, messages, memorandums, and so on—that are sent to or from the command. This chapter will teach you standard formats, variations to the standard letter, other forms of formal and informal letter correspondence, and message preparation.

CORRESPONDENCE

First we will describe the different types of Navy correspondence you will use; the standard letter, the joint letter, the multiple-address letter, endorsements, memorandums, and business letters.

THE STANDARD LETTER

Instructions for typing standard letters are contained in the *Navy Correspondence Manual,* SECNAVINST 5216.5. It is important to follow these instructions exactly. This is the "Navy way" of doing it, and uniformity is essential to an accurate and expeditious information flow. Figure 3-1 illustrates a sample standard letter.

Stationery

The first page of a naval letter contains the letterhead (name and address) of the activity printed on bond paper. The second and succeeding pages of a letter are typed on plain white bond paper that is the same size and quality as the letterhead paper.

Copies

Copies to each Via addressee and Copy to addressee are made on white carbon flimsy. The command file copy is made on yellow carbon flimsy. Other colors of flimsy paper may be used for internal routing, such as a daily read board. In all instances, photocopies may be used as long as copy quality is high and associated costs can be kept down.

General Style

A 1-inch margin is required at the top, bottom, and sides of each page, except for the top of letterhead paper and the bottom of the last page. A larger pica type is preferred over elite type, and script or italic type is used for occasional emphasis, never for a whole document. Indentation of subparagraphs is always four spaces. Ink should be black or blue-black for typing and signature.

Sender's Symbols

Include the following three sender's symbols in the upper right corner blocked one below the other:

- Standard subject identification code (SSIC)
- Originator's code by itself or in a serial number
- Date

This information goes right under the In reply refer to line, if it is printed on your letterhead. If In reply refer to is not printed on your letterhead, the information starts on the second line below the letterhead, starting 2 inches from the right edge of the paper.

The SSIC is determined by checking the Department of the *Navy File Maintenance Procedures and Standard Subject Identification Codes,* SECNAVINST 5210.11, for the SSIC that most closely represents the subject matter contained in the letter.

The originator's code is usually the office symbol of the drafter, but it may be the hull number of a ship. All classified material must be serialized, and unclassified material may be serialized if volume or local practice requires it. Starting with the notation Ser, followed by a space, your originator's code is followed by a slash (/). The classification abbreviation, C, S, or T, and the next unused serial number for your current calendar year complete the line; for example: Ser N13/271.

Dates

Letters are dated, either stamped or typed, the same day they are signed. Follow a day-month-year order with no punctuation. The month is abbreviated using the first three letters, capitalizing only the first, and the year is represented by its last two digits (25 Sep 95). In the text of the letter, however, the month and year are not abbreviated or shortened.

Special Postal Service

If special postal service is to be used, the appropriate designation (registered mail or certified mail) is typed in capitals or stamped at the left margin on the second line below the date.

From Block

Every standard letter must have a From block. Give your commanding officer's (CO's) title, your activity's name, and, for a command based ashore, its geographic location (without the state or ZIP Code). Use the *Standard Navy Distribution List* (SNDL) for the exact wording.

Type the word *From* and a colon at the left margin on the second line below the date. Two spaces follow the colon before the title. If a second line is needed to complete identification, start it directly under the first word after From:.

To Block

Address correspondence to the CO of an activity as if you are composing a From block. Give the complete mailing address, and include the ZIP Code if you want the address recorded on your file copy.

Type the word *To* and a colon at the left margin on the first line under the From block. Four spaces must follow the colon. Show the office that will act on your letter by including a code or person's title in parentheses right after the activity's name if the information is available. Add the word *Code* before codes that start with numbers. A code that starts with a letter is readily identifiable as a code without the added word.

Via Block

The Via block is used when one or more activities outside your own should see a letter before it reaches the Action addressees. List COs in the Via block the same way you list them in the To block.

Type the word *Via* and a colon at the left margin on the first line below the To block. Three spaces must follow the colon. Continuation lines start under the first word after the heading. Number the addressees (1), (2), (3), and so forth, if you list two or more. A single Via addressee is not numbered. Mail the letter to the Via addressee listed first.

Subject Block

The subject is a sentence fragment that tells readers what the letter is about, usually in 10 words or less.

Type the word (abbreviation) *Subj* and a colon at the left margin on the second line under the last line of the previous block. Two spaces must follow the colon. Normal word order is used and all letters are capitalized.

Example: Subj: REQUEST FOR A REVIEW OF YEOMAN THIRD AND SECOND CLASS TRAINING MANUAL

Reference Block

References are other documents to which the reader is directed to assist in dealing with the subject matter of the letter.

Type the word (abbreviation) *Ref* and a colon at the left margin on the second line below the Subject block. A lowercase letter in parentheses, such as (a), (b), (c), and so on, is used to identify each reference, even if only one is listed. Three spaces must follow the colon before the designation, and one space must follow the last parentheses. Use the following information to construct Reference blocks:

CORRESPONDENCE requires (1) SNDL short title of originator; (2) type of correspondence (ltr or memo); (3) SSIC; (4) originator's code by itself or in a serial number as shown in the referenced correspondence; and (5) date:

USS DAVID R. RAY (DD 971) ltr 5216 Ser DD 971/437 of 9 Sep 95

CNO memo 5216 Ser 09B33/317731 of 11 Sep 95

MESSAGES require (1) title of originator as shown in From block of message and (2) date-time-group (DTG) month and year:

USS DAVID R. RAY 091300Z Sep 95

CNO Washington DC 111300Z Sep 95 (NAVOP XXX/95)

NOTE: When you reference general messages, include the message title (ALNAV, NAVOP, ALNAVSTA, and so on) and the serial number/year in parentheses.

ENDORSEMENTS require the appropriate emphasis, depending on whether you want to mention them in passing or highlight a particular one:

ENS Jack R. Frost, USNR, 111-11-1111 ltr of 1 Apr 95 w/ends

COMNAVSURFAC third end 1070 Ser N1/3124 of 22 Apr 95

ENS Jack R. Frost, USNR, 111-11-1111 Itr of 1 Apr 95

TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS require (1) PHONCON, (2) individuals and their activities, and (3) date:

PHONCON OPNAV (OP-09B 15) Mrs. Brush/NAVSUP(Code 01222B) CDR Pistol of 16 Nov 95

INSTRUCTIONS require (1) SNDL short title of issuer; (2) INST, (3) SSIC with consecutive number and a revision letter, if any; (4) subject if not clear from the subject or text of your letter; and (5) chapter or paragraph of a long instruction if only that part applies:

SECNAVINST 5216.5, Department of the Navy Correspondence Manual, Ch. 2, Par. 14

NOTICES require (1) SNDL short title of issuer; (2) NOTE; (3) SSIC; (4) serial number, if any; (5) date because notices lack consecutive numbers; (6) subject if not clear from the subject or text of your letter; and (7) chapter or paragraph of a long notice if only that part applies:

OPNAVNOTE 5216 Ser 9B1/0920 of 20 Apr 95

FORMS. REPORTS. and PUBLICATIONS require the information shown as follows. Reports must include subjects; forms and publications may exclude them.

Form example: NAVJAG 5800/15 (Rev. 7-81)

Report example: Injury Report (NAVJAG 5800-19)

Publication example: NAVPERS 15018

MY AND YOUR OPTIONAL. To cite an earlier communication between your activity and the Action addressee, you may substitute a personal pronoun for the issuing activity.

My ltr 5216 Ser G12/4959 of 2 Jun 95

Your 221501Z Jul 95

To prevent confusion, avoid the pronoun *your* in the Reference block of a letter that has more than one action addressee. At times, a reference will be given that is not available to all the addressees. In such a case, the abbreviation NOTAL (not to all), enclosed in parentheses, is added following the reference.

Enclosure Block

Enclosures to a letter are used to avoid lengthening the letter with too many details or to include contextual matter such as lists or charts. List enclosures in an Enclosure block by following the order of their appearance in the text.

Type the word (abbreviation) *Encl* and a colon at the left margin on the second line below the previous block. Use a number in parentheses in front of the description of every enclosure, even a single one. Two spaces must follow the colon, and one space must follow the closing parentheses.

Encl: (1) List of Reserve Officers
          Selected for Promotion to
          Colonel
      (2) CMC ltr 5216 Ser MMPR/1451
          of 6 Jan 95

Normally, all addressees are sent a copy of all enclosures listed in the basic letter. When sending more than one copy of an enclosure to all addressees, note the number of copies mailed in parentheses; for instance:

Encl: (1) OPNAV 5216/10 (100 copies)

When varying the normal distribution of enclosures to Copy to addressees, follow these examples:

Copy to: (w/o encl)

Copy to: (w/o encls (2) and (3))

Copy to: (w/2 copies of encl (1))

When varying the normal distribution of enclosures to Via addressees, show the variation beside the affected Via addressee as follows:

Via: Commander, Naval Surface Force,
     U.S. Atlantic Fleet (w/o encl)

Identify an enclosure on the first page only. The marking goes in the lower right comer. The notation Encl plus its number in parentheses is typed, stamped, or written.

The standard letter practice of numbering only the second and later pages is followed. Each enclosure's pages are numbered independently of the other enclosures.

If an enclosure is to be mailed separately from the basic letter, the notation (sep cover) is placed after the enclosure's description in the Enclosure block.

Text

The text or main body of the letter begins on the second line below the preceding line of typing on the first and all succeeding pages. Paragraphing in the text is identified by numbers or letters as follows:

1. A main paragraph starts flush on the left margin and is identified with a whole number followed by a period.

a. The subdivisions of a paragraph are identified by lowercase alphabetical letters followed by a period and begin indented four spaces from the left margin.

b. If you need to use subparagraphs, use at least two of each type of subparagraph.

(1) Therefore, if subparagraphing reaches this level, a paragraph is also required.

(2) The only time you do not need at least two divisions is when there is only one main paragraph in the letter.

(a) This is the limit to subparagraphing. You should never subparagraph past this point. Either reorganize the information to make new major paragraphs or continue on at this level.

(b) Each level of subparagraphing is indented four spaces more than the previous level.

Finally, start a paragraph near the end of a page only if that page has room for two lines or more. Continue a paragraph on the following page only if two lines or more can be carried over. Signature pages must have at least two lines of text.

Signature Block

The signature is typed or stamped in block style at the center of the page four lines below the last line of the text. All the names are typed in capitals. The grade of the signer is not included, and the title is included only for a chief of staff, a deputy, an assistant chief, or an official authorized to sign correspondence or another official authorized to sign orders affecting pay and allowances.

Copy To Block

The Copy to block is placed at the left margin on the second line below the Signature block. Copy to stands alone with the Copy to addressees listed starting on the first line below. The addressees are listed by abbreviated titles.

Copy to addressees receive the complete letter, unless it is determined they hold certain enclosures already, or have no need for a specific enclosure. (The notation required in these cases was discussed earlier in this chapter.)

You can review figure 3-1 and see where all the previous information fits together.

Identifying Second and Later Pages

Repeat the subject shown on the first page on the sixth line from the top of the second and all later pages. Text continues on the second line following the subject. Center page numbers 1/2 inch (three lines) from the bottom edge of the paper, starting with number 2. No punctuation accompanies a page number. Figure 3-2 illustrates a continuation page.

Drafter's Identification on File Copies

Figure 3-2 also illustrates how drafter's identification is noted on file copies. Type, stamp, or write the name of the writer, the writer's office code, the date of typing, the writer's phone or room number (or both), and the typist's identification, if desired. The previous information is placed on the last page.

1
2
3
4 *DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
*Name of Activity
*Address

1
2 SSIC
Code/**Serial*
*Date

1
2 From: Title of activity head, name of activity, location when needed
To: Title of activity head, name of activity, location when needed (*Code*)
Via: (1) Title of activity head, name of activity, location when needed (not numbered if only one)
(2) Pattern of (1) repeated for next endorser

1
2 Subj: NORMAL WORD ORDER, ALL LETTERS CAPITALIZED

1
2 *Ref: (a) Earlier communication that bears directly on subject at hand*

1
2 *Encl: (1) Material enclosed with letter identified in same way as reference, single enclosure numbered*
(2) Notation added for material sent separately (sep cover)

1
2 1. This example shows all the elements that might appear on the original of a one-page standard letter.

2. If you omit the date when you type the letter, start the From block on the fourth line below the code/serial to allow for an oversized date stamp.

3. Other examples in this chapter show the spacing to follow for correspondence that variously omits Via, Reference, and Enclosure blocks.

1
2
3
4 *NAME OF SIGNER
**By direction*

1
2 *Copy to:*
Short title of information addressee (see SNDL)
Short title of second information addressee

ITALICS: OPTIONAL ITEMS
ASTERISKS: ITEMS YOU MAY STAMP
UNDERLINED NUMBERS: TYPEWRITER LINES

Figure 3-1.-Sample standard letter.

1
2
3
4
5
6 SUBJ: NORMAL WORD ORDER, ALL LETTERS CAPITALIZED
1
2 This sample illustrates a file copy of a standard letter's signature page. A second page should have at least two lines of text.

a. If you use a Copy to block, type it on all copies.

b. If you use a Blind copy block, add it to internal copies only.

c. If you identify the writer and typist, do so on the file copy only.

4. A standard letter uses no complimentary close.
1
2
3
4 F. A. BRUSH
By direction
1
2 Copy to:
USS CLARK (FFG 11)
USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40)
1
2 Blind copy to:
387.2
967

Writer: P. T. Boat, 385.6, X74366
Typist: W. T. Door, 14 Oct 95

Figure 3-2.-Sample file copy of continuation page.

JOINT LETTER

The joint letter shown in figure 3-3 is a variation of the standard letter, where two or more commands wish to issue information that establishes an agreement or discusses a matter of mutual concern. Several changes occur in preparation of such a letter.

The first page is prepared on plain bond paper with the titles of the commands listed in seniority centered at the top of the page in the place of printed letterhead. Duplicate senders' information is shown, with the senior command's information on the normal line, but ending flush with the right margin.
The words *JOINT LETTER* are typed two lines below the date.

Signature blocks are arranged across the page with the senior official's signature ending flush with the right margin and the most junior official's signature beginning at the left margin. A third cosigner would be centered on the page.

MULTIPLE-ADDRESS LETTER

A multiple-address letter is addressed to two or more activities individually identified in the To block or as a group in the Distribution block. It is typed in the usual manner of a standard letter with the exception that more than one title is listed in the To block in seniority order. Begin each new title on its own line.

Each addressee must receive a letterhead copy with a signature. It can be an original copy or a photocopy. If carbon copies are used, make sure letterhead information is typed or stamped on each copy and have each copy signed as an original. See figures 3-4 and 3-5 for examples of multiple-address letters.

ENDORSEMENTS

When a letter comes to your activity because you are a Via addressee, your command must acknowledge its receipt and provide comments to the other addressees. For this purpose an endorsement is prepared rather than another letter. Same-page endorsements (fig. 3-6) are appropriate when comments are brief and few or no record copies are required. A new-page endorsement is necessary if comments are long and multiple record copies are required. A Via addressee may endorse a letter and signify no comment by signing and placing the date opposite the appropriate title in the Via block.

A new-page endorsement shown in figure 3-7 is prepared on letterhead paper, and a typed endorsement is prepared the same way as a standard letter except as indicated.

Copies

In addition to the required file copies, a copy of the endorsement is prepared for each remaining Via addressee and for the originator of the basic letter. When the endorsement is of particular significance, a copy is provided to each prior endorser also.

Format

Each endorsement is numbered in the sequence in which it is added to the basic letter. The number of the endorsement, FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, and so on, followed by the word *ENDORSEMENT* is typed at the left margin on the second line below the date. This is followed by the word on and identification of the basic letter. The basic letter is identified in the same way as in a normal Reference block. When the number of the endorsement and the identification of the basic letter exceed one line, the second and succeeding lines begin flush with the word on.

1
2
3
4 DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Naval Sea Systems Command
Naval Supply Systems Command
Washington, DC 20314

1
2 NAVSUP
5216
Ser 02/318
9 Mar 1995

NAVSEA
5216
Ser 07/207
25 Mar 95

1
2
3 JOINT LETTER
1
2 From: Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command
Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command
To: Chief of Naval Operations

1
2 Subj: HOW TO PREPARE A JOINT LETTER

1. Use. A joint letter may be used to establish an agreement between two or more commands or for other matters of mutual concern.

2. Letterhead. On plain bond, type command titles so the senior is at the top. If the activities are in different cities or states, follow each title with its address.

3. Signatures. Arrange Signature blocks so the senior is at the right. Place the Signature block of a third cosigner in the middle of the page.

4. Copies. If your command is the last to sign, send copies of the signed letter to all cosigners.

1
2
3
M. L. CHRISTMAS
Acting

W. T. Door
Deputy

Figure 3-3.-Sample joint letter.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER IN CHIEF
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
PEARL HARBOR, HI 96860

1 5216
2 Ser N43/2735
8 Jul 95

1
2 From: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet
To: Commander, Third Fleet
Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

1
2 Subj: WHEN TO USE THE TO BLOCK BY ITSELF
1
2 1. If you have four addressees or less, list all of them in a To block. If you have more than four addressees, list all of them in a Distribution block.

2. Use only long titles in the To block.

1
2
3
4 P. T. Boat
By direction

1
2 Copy to:
CHNAVMAT (MAT-05)
COMNAVSEASYSCOM (SEA-06)

Figure 3-4.-Sample multiple-address letter with To block

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER NAVAL AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
NAVAL AIR STATION, NORTH ISLAND
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92123

1
2 5216
Ser N31/2406
7 Jun 95

1
2 From: Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: WHEN TO USE THE DISTRIBUTION BLOCK BY ITSELF

1. Drop the To block and add a Distribution block if you have more than four individual action addressees or if you vary the number of copies to any of the addressees. You may list addressees in the Distribution block by SNDL short titles or collective titles or both.

2. Like addressees shown in a To block, those shown in a Distribution block are action addressees.

3. Arrange distribution and Copy to addressees in columns if doing so will keep a letter from going to another page.

1
2
3
4 F. A. BRUSH
By direction

1
2 Distribution:
SNDL
42J2 (COMCARAIRWING PAC) (4 copies)
42K2 (ATKRON PAC)
42L2 (FITRON PAC)
USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 68)

1
2 Copy to:
CINCPACFLT (N35)
COMSEVENTHFLT (N3)

Figure 3-5.-Sample multiple-address letter with Distribution block.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL AIR STATION
PENSACOLA, FL 32508

1
2 5216
Ser 11/352
3 Jun 95

1
2 From: Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station, Pensacola
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
Via: (1) Commander, Sea Based ASW Wings, Atlantic
(2) Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

1
2 Subj: HOW TO PREPARE ENDORSEMENTS

Encl: (1) Orientation Schedule for Newcomers

1. Same-page endorsements may be added to a basic letter, like this one, or to a previous endorsement. This sentence cites enclosure (1).

1
2
3
4 J. T. BOAT
1
2 -
1
2 Ser 019/98
17 Jun 95

1
2 FIRST ENDORSEMENT
1
2 From: Commander, Sea Based ASW Wings, Atlantic
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
Via: Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

1
2 1. Start an endorsement on the same page as the latest communication if the answer to all three questions is yes:

a. Is the latest communication less than a page?

b. Will all of the endorsement fit on that page?

c. Is the endorsement sure to be signed without revision?

2. A same-page endorsement may omit the SSIC, subject, and basic-letter's identification as long as the entire page will be photocopied. However, all three elements are required if you make carbon copies. These elements also are required on all new-page endorsements, such as the one in figure 3-7.

1
2
3
4 MARY CHRISTMAS
1
2 Copy to:
NAS Pensacola (Code 11)

Figure 3-6.-Sample same page endorsement.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER NAVAL AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET
NORFOLK, VA 23511

1
2 5216
Ser N72/4201
24 Jun 95

1
2 SECOND ENDORSEMENT on NAS Pensacola ltr 52126 Ser 11/352 of 3 Jun 95
1
2 From: Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
To: Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
1
2 Subj: HOW TO PREPARE ENDORSEMENTS
1
2 Encl: (2) SECNAVINST 5216.5C
1
2 1. Start an endorsement on a new page if the answer to one or more of these questions is no:

a. Is the latest communication less than a page?

b. Will all of the endorsements fit on that page?

c. Is the endorsement sure to be signed without revision?

2. Number every page; continue the sequence of numbers from the previous communication, as explained in enclosure (2).

3. Like a same-page endorsement prepared with carbon copies, every new-page endorsement must--

a. Repeat the basic letter's SSIC.

b. Identify the basic letter in the Endorsement-Number block.

c. Use the basic letter's subject as its own.

1
2
3
4 V. C. PISTOL
By direction
1
2 Copy to:
NAS Pensacola (Code 11)
*COMSEABASEDASWWINGLANT (Code 019)

*Prior endorser appears because second endorsement is significant.

Figure 3-7.-Sample new page endorsement.

Via Block

Only the remaining Via addressees, if any, are listed in the endorsement's Via block. They are left in the same order, although they can be modified, if necessary, and renumbered (1), (2), (3), and so on.

Reference Block

The references listed in the basic letter and in the previous endorsement are not repeated. If a new reference is introduced in your endorsement, it is lettered in a continuous sequence from the basic letter and/or preceding endorsements.

Enclosure Block

The enclosures listed in the basic letter and previous endorsements also are not repeated. New enclosures added are numbered in sequence from the basic letter and/or preceding endorsements.

Paging

The page number on an endorsement follows the numbering of the basic letter and preceding endorsements; that is, a two-page endorsement to a three-page basic letter would be numbered 4 and 5.

MEMORANDUM

A memorandum provides an informal way to correspond within an activity or between several activities. Subordinates may use it to correspond directly with each other on routine business.

The four formats from which you can choose are as follows, starting with the most informal:

Printed Memorandum Form (OPNAV 5216/144)

Plain-paper memorandum

Letterhead memorandum

Memorandum For

Use the format that best suits the subject, occasion, and audience.

PRINTED MEMORANDUM FORM

As the most informal, the printed memorandum (fig. 3-8) is used among individuals and offices of the same activity. Information is typed or written beside preprinted entries, and the text is prepared the same way as in a standard letter.

PLAIN-PAPER MEMORANDUM

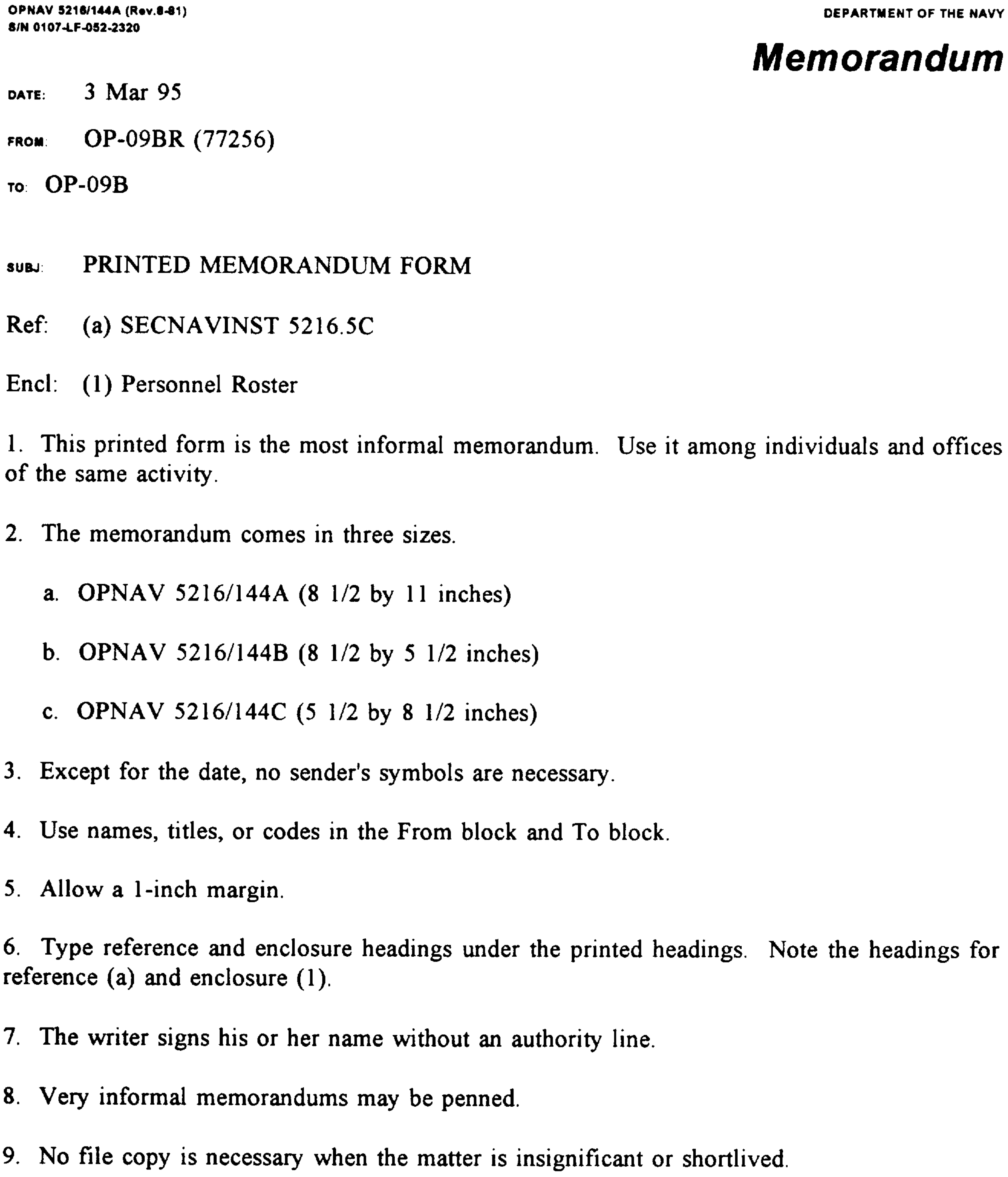
When the heading information necessary (more than one addressee or when Via addressees are needed) prevents use of the printed memorandum, the plain-paper memorandum is used (fig. 3-9). It is prepared on plain white bond, placing the date at the right margin, 1 inch from the top of the page. The word *MEMORANDUM* is typed at the left margin on the second line below the date. The From line is typed on the second line below MEMORANDUM, and all subsequent lines follow the rules of the standard letter.

LETTERHEAD MEMORANDUM

When a subordinate office is authorized direct liaison outside the command, the letterhead memorandum is used (fig. 3-10). It provides more formality and information to the recipient that is not available in the plain-paper memorandum. Standard letter rules apply, once again adding the word *MEMORANDUM* after the date and before the From block. A sender's Information block is usually used in this case.

MEMORANDUM FOR

The memorandum for is the most formal memorandum (fig. 3-11), It may be used in writing to senior officials who traditionally



OPNAV 5216/144A (Rev.8-81)
S/N 0107-LF-052-2320

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Memorandum

DATE: 3 Mar 95

FROM: OP-09BR (77256)

TO: OP-09B

SUBJ: PRINTED MEMORANDUM FORM

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5216.5C

Encl: (1) Personnel Roster

1. This printed form is the most informal memorandum. Use it among individuals and offices of the same activity.

2. The memorandum comes in three sizes.

   a. OPNAV 5216/144A (8 1/2 by 11 inches)

   b. OPNAV 5216/144B (8 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches)

   c. OPNAV 5216/144C (5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches)

3. Except for the date, no sender's symbols are necessary.

4. Use names, titles, or codes in the From block and To block.

5. Allow a 1-inch margin.

6. Type reference and enclosure headings under the printed headings. Note the headings for reference (a) and enclosure (1).

7. The writer signs his or her name without an authority line.

8. Very informal memorandums may be penned.

9. No file copy is necessary when the matter is insignificant or shortlived.

Figure 3-8.-Sample printed memorandum form.

1
2
3
4
5
6 10 Sep 95

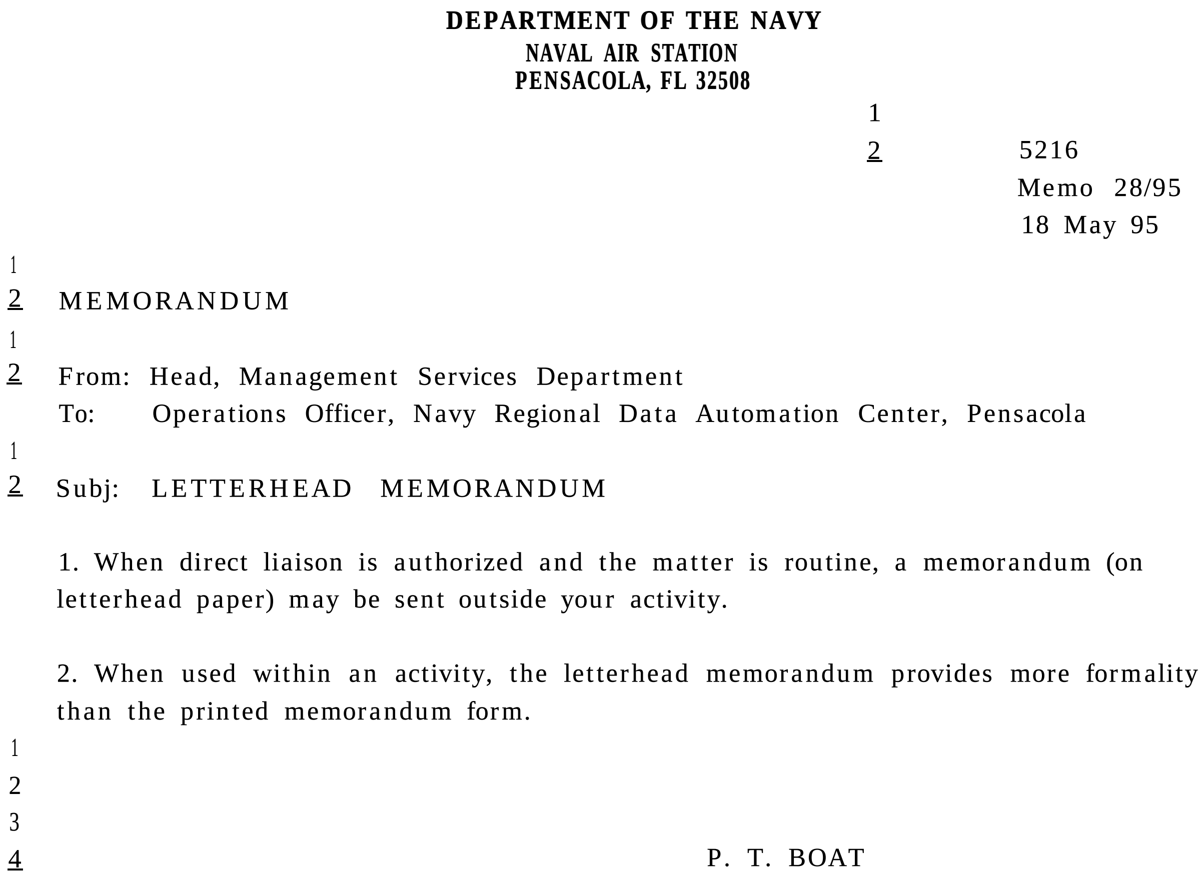
1
2 MEMORANDUM
1
2 From: Head, Organization and Directives Branch (Code 211)
To: Head, Technical Library Branch (Code 111)
Head, Mail and Files Branch (Code 112)
Via: Head, Office Services Division (Code 110)
1
2 Subj: PLAIN-PAPER MEMORANDUM

1. The plain-paper memorandum may be used within your activity.

2. It is no more formal than the memorandum form, but it is more flexible when there are multiple addressees, via addressees, or both.

3. Prepare a plain-paper memorandum on white bond.
1
2
3
4 P. T. BOAT

Figure 3-9.-Sample plain-paper memorandum.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL AIR STATION
PENSACOLA, FL 32508

1
2 5216
Memo 28/95
18 May 95

1
2 MEMORANDUM

1
2 From: Head, Management Services Department
To: Operations Officer, Navy Regional Data Automation Center, Pensacola

1
2 Subj: LETTERHEAD MEMORANDUM

1. When direct liaison is authorized and the matter is routine, a memorandum (on letterhead paper) may be sent outside your activity.

2. When used within an activity, the letterhead memorandum provides more formality than the printed memorandum form.

1
2
3
4 P. T. BOAT

Figure 3-10.-Sample letterhead memorandum.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO
5216
Ser 943D/345507
11 Mar 95

1
2 MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
1
2 Subj: THE MEMORANDUM FOR

1. The memorandum for is the most formal memorandum. It may be used in writing to senior officials who traditionally have used it. Among them are the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy.

2. Because the memorandum for lacks a From block, show the signer's title below the typed name.

3. Multiple addressees are listed as shown above.

1
2
3
4 W. T. DOOR
Director, Navy Space Systems Division

Figure 3-11.-Sample memorandum for.

have used it. Among them are the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy. A sender's Information block is used. The From and To blocks, however, are not. The words *MEMORANDUM FOR THE* followed by the title of the official to receive the memorandum are typed on the second line below the date. If more than one official is to be sent the memorandum, second and subsequent titles are listed directly under the first word after THE.

Since this format does not have a From block, show the signer's title below the typed name in the Signature block. Use all other rules of the standard letter.

BUSINESS LETTER

The business letter (fig. 3-12) is used to correspond with agencies or individuals outside the Department of the Navy who are unfamiliar with the standard naval letter. It may also be used for correspondence between individuals within the Navy when the occasion calls for a personal approach. The business letter is always prepared on letterhead paper.

Since the business letter has no From block, all copies going outside the command must have the letterhead information stamped or printed on them. The determining factor in setting the margins is the letter's length. A letter less than one page long is centered to give it a well-balanced appearance (fig. 3-13). The text may even be double-spaced to aid in balancing if it runs eight lines or less.

SENDER'S INFORMATION AND MARKINGS

The sender's Information block is the same as a standard letter. Special postal service markings are placed on the left margin two lines below the date. Any classification markings are placed on the line below the special postal instruction, if any. All other classification marking requirements are the same as in a standard letter.

ADDRESS

The address begins at the left margin and, depending on the length of the letter, should be placed on the second line below the previous block. The exception to this is when the letter is short (fig. 3-13) and the body of the letter must be lowered to balance it on the paper. The address is typed block style, single-spaced, and should be at least three, but no more than four, lines long.

SALUTATION

The salutation, followed by a colon, is typed at the left margin on the second line below the address. A list of standard salutation formats is contained in the *Navy Correspondence Manual.*

TEXT

The text begins on the second line after the salutation. It is normally single-spaced within paragraphs; avoid indenting or numbering main paragraphs. Indent the first lines of subparagraphs four spaces, and they may be lettered and numbered in standard letter fashion.

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE

Use Sincerely, for the complimentary close of a business letter. Start typing at the center of the page on the second line below the text.

SIGNATURE

Start all lines of the Signature block at the center of the page on the fourth line below Sincerely. Type or stamp the following information:

- Name of signer in all capital letters
- Military grade (if any) spelled out

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS CUSHING (DD 985)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CA 96662

1
2 5216
Ser DD 985/28
January 5, 1995

1
2 Coover Precision, Inc.
Attn: J. Doe
6923 W. Hobson Blvd.
New York, NY 11378

1
2 Gentlemen:

1
2 When writing to a company in general but directing your letter to a particular person or office, use an attention line between the company's name and its address. Type *Attn:* and then a name or title.

Make the salutation agree with the first line of the address. If the first line is a company name, the salutation is *Gentlemen* even if the attention line directs the letter to an individual. Note the inside address and salutation in this letter.

1
2 Sincerely,
1
2
3 F. A. BRUSH
Commander, U.S. Navy
Executive Officer
By direction of the
Commanding Officer

1
2 Encl:
(1) Correspondence Manual (sep cover)

Figure 3-12.-Sample business letter.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SUPPORT ACTIVITY
PENSACOLA, FL 32508

1
2 5216
Code 53
8 Apr 95

1
2
3
4
5
6
7 Ms Mary Christmas
J. M. Corporation
287 Duke Street
Newton, CA 93333

Dear Ms Ryan:

Use any or all of three techniques to balance the appearance of a letter that would run eight lines or less if typed normally. Start the address more than two lines below the date, use side margins as wide as 2 inches, and double-space throughout the text of the letter.

Indent paragraphs of a short business letter if you have two or more.

1
2 Sincerely,
1
2
3
4 FLOSS A. BRUSH
Head, Management Services
By direction of the Commander

Figure 3-13.-Sample short business letter.

- Functional title

- By direction of the (senior official's title), if appropriate

REFERENCES AND ENCLOSURES

The business letter does not provide for a Reference block. Any references are mentioned in the text only. Enclosures are both mentioned in the text and then described briefly in an Enclosure block. Type Encl: at the left margin on the second line below the Signature block and list the enclosures beneath the heading. The rules for marking special distribution of enclosures are the same as in a standard letter.

COPY TO BLOCK

If everyone should know that a particular addressee will receive an information copy, show that addressee in the Copy to block. Use long titles for activities listed in the SNDL. Type the words Copy to with a colon at the left margin on the second line below the previous block (Enclosure block, if any, or the Signature block). Addressees are listed beginning on the next line at the left margin.

MESSAGES

This portion of the chapter will introduce you to basic message traffic format (MTF). Although there are many types and modes of communications, the basic naval message must conform to a standard format with few exceptions. As a YN, you need to be familiar with all of them.

COMMON MESSAGE ELEMENTS

Before covering the basic format of military messages, we will first discuss the time system, precedence categories, and speed-of-service objectives used in naval communications.

Time

Time is one of the most important elements in communications. Messages are normally identified and filed by either a DTG or a Julian date, depending on the method of transmission.

Date-Time-Group

The DTG is assigned for identification and file purposes only. The DTG consists of six digits. The first two digits represent the date, the second two digits represent the hour, and the third two digits represent the minutes. For example, 221327Z AUG 94 means the 22nd day of August plus the time in Greenwich mean time (GMT). The dates from the first to the ninth of the month are preceded by a zero.

This designation is followed by a zone suffix and the month and year. The month is expressed by its first three letters and the year, by the last two digits of year of origin; for example, 081050Z AUG 94. The zone suffix ZULU (Z), for GMT, is used as the universal time for all messages.

Greenwich Mean Time

In naval communications, the DTG is computed from a common worldwide standard. To meet the need for worldwide time standardization, the international GMT system was developed. The GMT system uses a 24-hour clock instead of the two 12-hour cycles used in the normal civilian world.

Julian Date

The Julian date consists of three digits. They represent the day of the year. The first day of the calendar year is Julian 001, and each day is numbered consecutively thereafter. For example, in Julian 0311315, 031 is the 31st day of the calendar year (January 31).

Precedence

The message drafter indicates the desired writer-to-reader delivery time through the assignment of a message precedence. Although the drafter determines the precedence, the releaser should either confirm or change it.

The following paragraphs list the various precedence categories, their indicators, and basic definitions:

- ROUTINE (R). Processed within 6 hours. This category is assigned to all types of traffic that justify electrical transmission but which are not of sufficient urgency to require a higher precedence.

- PRIORITY (P). Processed within 3 hours. This category is reserved for messages that furnish essential information for the conduct of operations in progress. This is the highest precedence normally authorized for administrative messages.

- IMMEDIATE (O). Processed within 30 minutes. This category is reserved for messages relating to situations that gravely affect the national forces or populace and that require immediate delivery to addressees.

- FLASH (Z). Processed as fast as possible with an objective of less than 10 minutes. This category is reserved for initial enemy contact reports or operational combat messages of extreme urgency; message brevity is mandatory.

Precedence is assigned according to urgency, based solely on writer-to-reader time, not according to the importance of the subject matter or the text. For example, an unclassified message may be assigned an IMMEDIATE precedence, whereas a Secret message may be assigned a ROUTINE precedence. In this situation, the unclassified message requires fast action or response, whereas the Secret message may not require any action at all.

Address Component

The address component contains the designation of the originating station identified by the originator prosign FM (meaning “from”). Prosign TO contains the designation(s) of the action addressee(s), if any. Prosign INFO contains the designation(s) of the information addressee(s), if any.

Addressee designations in the address component may be call signs, address groups, plain language designators, or a combination of routing indicators and plain language designators.

The separation sign BT, meaning “break” provides a distinct separation between the heading and the text and between the text and the ending.

Text

The text is the part of the message that contains the thought or idea that the drafter desires to communicate.

In drafting the text for transmission, the drafter should strive for brevity through the proper choice of words and good writing technique. However, brevity must never be achieved at the expense of accuracy or clarity. Uncommon phrases and modes of expression can render the meaning of a message ambiguous or obscure.

The text must be worded so that it unmistakably expresses the thoughts to be conveyed. All abbreviations must be limited to those meanings that are self-evident or those that are recognizable by virtue of long established use. We will now discuss some of the more important requirements concerning the text of a message.

Classification Line

The classification line is the first line of the text and immediately follows the BT that separates the heading and text. This line indicates the message classification and, when applicable, special-handling markings, codes, or flag words. This line also provides the SSIC.

For United States use, the three security classification designators are Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret. The acronyms FOUO (For Official Use Only) and EFTO (Encrypt For Transmission Only) are not classification designators. They are used with the designation UNCLAS in the classification line.

Restricted Data and Formerly Restricted Data are similar except that they are used with classification designators. You can find information concerning the criteria and handling of FOUO and EFTO messages in the *Telecommunications Users Manual,* NTP 3.

Special-Handling Markings

Certain types of messages require special handling in addition to that provided by the security classification. These special markings are placed in the classification line immediately following the classification. Some of the more common special-handling markings that you will see are the following:

- Special Category (SPECAT)
- Limited Distribution (LIMDIS)
- PERSONAL FOR

SPECAT messages come in two variations. One type includes both the general SPECAT and the SPECAT Single Integrated Operational Plan-Extremely Sensitive Information (SPECAT SIOP-ESI).

The other type of SPECAT message is SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR (SEF). SEF is used only within the naval community for highly sensitive matters, high-level policy, or when politically sensitive information is to be passed only to a particular individual. The classification line would then contain the name of that individual. For example, a Secret message destined exclusively for Admiral W. T. Door would read:

SECRET SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR ADM W. T. DOOR //N00000//

SEF messages are reserved for use by flag officers and officers in a command status. These messages are not intended for use in operational matters, and they may not be readdressed nor referenced in other narrative messages.

SPECAT messages are handled only by those personnel who are authorized to view them as approved in writing by the CO.

LIMDIS messages are associated with special projects, cover names, or specific subjects. These messages require limited distribution within the addressed activity to those personnel with a need to know and who are specifically authorized by the command to have access to the information. Only classified messages qualify for the special-handling marking LIMDIS. However, the classification is still assigned according to the subject matter. The classification line of a Secret LIMDIS message would read SECRET LIMDIS. PERSONAL FOR messages may be unclassified or classified and are reserved for flag rank and command status officers. Distribution of these messages is limited to the named recipient (who may direct further distribution). In PERSONAL FOR messages, the classification line always shows the name or title of the intended recipient and may show the name or title of the originator.

PERSONAL FOR messages are used only by and addressed only to Navy commands.

Standard Subject Identification Code

The SSIC identifies the subject matter of the message. The SSIC is preceded and followed by two slant signs; as, UNCLAS E F T O FOUO //N02000//. The SSIC always contains five digits corresponding to the particular subject matter, preceded by the letter N. With few exceptions, an SSIC is required on all naval messages. Those messages without SSICs are normally returned to the drafter. Many automated systems route message traffic by the SSIC.

SSICs are contained in *Department of the Navy File Maintenance Procedures and Standard Subject ldentification Codes*, SECNAVINST 5210.11.

Passing and Delivery Instructions

The majority of naval automated message processing systems rely on specific elements at the beginning of the text. These elements may be flag words, code words, subject lines, and outgoing/incoming message references. These elements serve as guides and assist the automated internal routing of messages. Special delivery instructions, such as FOR, FROM, PASS TO ______, are additional means of indicating that the text of the message is to receive the attention of the indicated individual or office without necessarily limiting the normal distribution.

Special delivery instructions, when used, follow the SSIC. These instructions are used for exceptional cases not covered by use of office codes in the address. Passing instructions must not be separated into an individual paragraph of the text. They should follow the SSIC and can continue on the line immediately following the classification and SSIC.

Subject Line

The subject line indicates the basic contents of the message. Internal message routers and Navy automated message processing systems key on the subject to determine internal message distribution. Therefore, messages containing similar information should be assigned a standard subject whenever possible to facilitate message identification and internal distribution.

The subject line of a message begins at the left-hand margin immediately following the classification line with the characters SUBJ.

Reference Lines

Reference lines are used to avoid repeating lengthy quotations or references within the text of a message. A reference may be any message, document, correspondence, or telephone conversation that is pertinent to the message. When a reference is referred to in the text, it would be called REF (A), REF (B), or REF (C), as applicable.

Indenting

The classification, subject, and reference set lines will always begin at the left-hand margin. Textual material may be indented a maximum of 20 spaces for clarity.

Remarks

The RMKS (remarks) set begins the actual text. The message may contain several subjects or several aspects of one subject. For this reason, textual material is divided into paragraphs and subparagraphs (numbered and lettered consecutively).

Classification and Paragraph Markings

When a message is classified, the subject line, all paragraphs, and subparagraphs are marked with the appropriate classification symbol. This eliminates any doubt in the reader's mind as to the classification of a particular paragraph.

Punctuation

Punctuation is used within the text of a message when essential for clarity.

MINIMIZE Considered

During an actual or simulated emergency, it may become necessary to reduce the volume of record and/or voice communications ordinarily transmitted over U.S. military telecommunications circuits. This action, known as MINIMIZE, is designed to clear communications networks of messages that are not considered urgent. Only those messages that affect the accomplishment of a mission or safety of life are considered essential and, therefore, require electronic transmission during MINIMIZE periods.

The releasing officer must review messages that have not been released during MINIMIZE periods. The releasing officer must determine if a message can be sent via another means or if it must be sent electrically via telecommunications circuits. If the releasing officer releases a message for transmission, the words *MINIMIZE CONSIDERED* and *RELEASED BY* must be included.

Downgrading Instructions

All classified messages must contain a downgrading or declassification instruction with the exception of Restricted Data and Formerly Restricted Data messages.

GENERAL MESSAGES

General messages provide a standard distribution to a large group of addressees and are identified by a repetitive short title (for example, ALNAV, NAVOP, JAFPUB).

All commands to whom general messages are distributed are action addressees. However, each command receiving a general message is responsible for determining what action, if any, it needs to take on the message.

Although general messages have a wide, standardized distribution, all addressees may not need to take action. However, commands are required to keep a continuous numerical file of all general messages for which they are on the distribution list and receive. Consequently, the general message files should contain every general message received during the calendar year, in numerical order. The general message files are separate from all other files and are subdivided according to identifying title or type.

PRO FORMA MESSAGES

Pro forma messages are messages whose subject matter and sequence of textual content are preset and cannot be changed by the originator.

MINIMIZE MESSAGES

Minimize means, "It is now mandatory that normal message and telephone traffic be reduced drastically so that vital messages connected with the situation indicated will not be delayed."

A message ordering MINIMIZE consists of the word *MINIMIZE,* followed by the area affected (scope), reason, and duration of the MINIMIZE condition (when known).

COMMUNICATIONS GUARD SHIFT MESSAGES

Communications guard shift (COMMSHIFT) messages are required when a command shifts its guard from one broadcast or servicing communications center to another. When possible, the shift takes effect at 0001Z of the new radio day. When broadcasts are shifted, an overlap period before and after the effective time is observed to ensure continuity of traffic. Detailed information concerning communications guard shift messages and formats is contained in Naval Telecommunications Publication 4 (NTP-4).

MESSAGE AND ROUTING ADDRESSEES

Messages may be divided into types, according to the way they are addressed, as follows:

- SINGLE-ADDRESS. A message that has only one addressee, which may be either for action or information.

- MULTIPLE-ADDRESS. A message that has two or more addressees, which may be either action or information and where each addressee is informed of all other recipients.

- BOOK. A message destined for two or more addressees but where the drafter considers it unnecessary that each addressee be informed of other addressees. Book messages are routed according to each addressee's relay station. All unnecessary addressees are deleted from the face of the message before being sent to the addressee(s) served by that particular relay station.

- GENERAL MESSAGE. A message that has a wide, predetermined, standard distribution. General messages are normally titled with a sequential number for the current year; for example, ALCOM 28/94, NAVOP 30/94. The title indicates distribution and serves as the address designator.

Address Indicating Groups

The purpose of address indicating groups (AIGs) is to increase the speed-of-traffic handling. They shorten the message address by providing a single address group to represent a large number of addressees. This eliminates individual designators for each address used in the heading.

Message Addresses

Absolute consistency in the format and spelling of a plain language address (PLA) was not critical before to the implementation of automated message-processing systems. Because communications personnel processed all messages, deviations in address spelling were tolerated. This is no longer true. Message drafters must now verify the PLA for each addressee in the *Message Address Directory* (MAD) and not rely on memory or copy PLAs from incoming messages.

Message Address Directory

The MAD contains authorized message addresses and is divided into sections: Joint Department of Defense (JDOD PLAD), U.S. Military Communications—Electronics Board Publication (MCEB Pub 6), Army, Air Force, and Navy. The Navy section, "U.S. Navy Plain Language Address Directory (USN PLAD 1)," includes message addresses for Marine Corps and Coast Guard activities. MAD UPDATEs are published four times a year to ensure all addresses are current.

Plain Language Addresses

The PLAs listed in USN PLAD 1 are the only designators authorized for use in message addressing to Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard activities. Deviations from USN PLAD 1 in spelling, spacing, or formatting cannot be tolerated because automated message-processing systems are keyed to USN PLAD 1 entries.

Office Codes

Office codes are required for all Navy shore activity PLAs. Office codes follow the PLA and are enclosed in double slants; for example, CNO WASHINGTON DC//094//. There is no limit on the number of office codes that can be used with a PLA. When multiple office codes are used with a PLA, the first code is the action code. A single slant separates multiple codes; for example, CNO WASHINGTON DC//094/611//. If an office code is not known, the code //JJJ// is used after the PLA. Office codes are not used with AIGs, CADs, or PLAs in pro forma messages. NTP-3 has further information concerning office codes used with PLAs.

MESSAGE USER RESPONSIBILITIES

A message user is any individual authorized to draft, release, and/or process electronically transmitted messages. There are certain responsibilities associated with the origination of a message. These responsibilities are separate and distinct and concern the following parties:

- Originator
- Drafter
- Releaser

Occasionally, the responsibilities may overlap, especially if one person is serving a dual capacity. For example, administrative officers may occasionally draft and release messages, thus making them both drafters and releasers.

Originator

The originator is the authority (command or activity) in whose name the message is sent. The originator is presumed to be the CO of the command or activity. Most often, the originator and the releaser are one and the same. In some cases, the drafter, releaser, and originator are all the same person. For example, if the CO drafts a message for transmission, he or she is the drafter as well as the releasing authority for the activity in whose name the message is sent.

Drafter

The drafter is the person who actually composes the message. According to NTP-3, the drafter is responsible for the following:

- Addressing and using PLAs correctly
- Ensuring clear, concise composition
- Selecting the precedence
- Ensuring the proper format
- Assigning the proper classification
- Ensuring the application of proper downgrading and declassification instructions to classified messages, except those containing Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data

Releaser

The releaser is a properly designated individual authorized to release messages for transmission in the name of the command or activity. The releasing individual makes sure that the drafter has complied with the requirements contained in the NTP-3. In addition to validating the contents of the message, the signature of the releaser affirms compliance with message-drafting instructions. The signature of the releaser authorizes the message for transmission.

MESSAGE FORMAT

General administrative (GENADMIN) is the format used for most narrative messages. The exceptions are those narrative messages for which a publication, instruction, or other directive requires a different format. There are other formats for special-purpose messages. These messages include casualty reports (CASREPs), movement reports (MOVREPs), and Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS). Instructions for preparing these messages are found in appropriate publications.

SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the formats used in naval correspondence and messages. Although some of these formats may seem complicated, the more you type them, the easier they will become. Refer to the references listed in this chapter frequently; they will answer any question you may have.